

Once!

Yes, you became a farmer in the not so long ago
When farmers plowed with horses and depended on the hoe.
Cut our logs in tandem, in winter or late fall
To split it up for cordwood with grunts, and wedge, and maul.

You started in the Springtime to walk behind the plow
Which took weeks of doing, but takes but days right now.
Of course the drills and planters were the same except for size --
With the coming of the tractor, now we mechanize.

In the barn in early morning 'fore the skies began to clear
You'd be busy with the feeding, and milking time was near.
The cows came to the feeder trough, their necks with chains you bound,
The pinging in the milking pail--a cheerful welcome sound.

And you pumped barrels of water and your breath came out in steam
As you eyed the far horizon to catch the sun's first gleam.
You shoveled out the yellow corn to hungry squealing hogs,
Your boots made slurping, sucking sounds in muddy barnyard bogs.

The roosters started in to crow, the little and the big,
You grabbed the broken four tined fork to wrestle and to dig.
There always seemed so much of it, more than the barn could hold,
But you had learned to realize 'twas worth its weight in gold.

Then you went up to the house, stopped at woodshed on the way
To feed the old woodburning stove just as the skies turned gray.
You sat down to a breakfast that could be a feast for kings
Of sausage, eggs, potatoes, wheatcakes and other things.

And coffee, that was coffee, brewed in our granite pot
With cream as thick as butter, and served, just piping hot.
With homemade bread and biscuits, with golden butter spread
To dip in dark molasses, or there'd be apple jell instead.

Then you'd lean back from the table, making well filled stomach sounds
While the wife would stack the dishes and throw out coffee grounds.
You'd sit a minute, resting, get up, stretch, and say
"Guess I'd better get agoing 'r I'll get nothing done today"!

And the sun would just be peeping out there at the eastern skies,
And seemed to be a rubbing the cloud-webs from its eyes.
And you cocked your eyes toward heaven to check the clouds up there,
To see if snow was in the cards you sniffed the morning air.

The frost was thick on meadow, the chill wind hardly blew
So you oiled and greased the spreader and tightened up the screw.
You whistled up the horses, they were walking toward the gate,
Put feed in the manger and checked harness while they ate.